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A DISCOURSE

PREPARED FOR THE

NATIONAL FAST DAY

JUNE 1st, 1865,

ON ACCOUNT OF THE

Murder of our late President,

AND PREACHED AT

ST. THOMAS' CHURCH, HOMESTEAD, BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD.

By ETHAN ALLEN, RECTOR.

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DISCOURSE.

JESUS TURNING UNTO THEM SAID—DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM,
WEEP NOT FOR ME, BUT WEEP FOR YOURSELVES AND FOR
YOUR CHILDREN. Luke, 23 : 28.

FIVE hundred and fifty years before the Christian era, the coming of one had been foretold—Dan. 9 : 25—who was called Messiah—the Prince—or chief ruler. The time of his coming at length arrived. And the angel said to Mary—Luke, 1 : 31-2—thou shalt call his name Jesus. And the Lord God shall give unto him the *throne* of his father David,—2 : 11—the angels at his birth announced him to the shepherds—a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. The wise men from the East, come now to Jerusalem, asking,—Mat. 2 : 2—where is he, that is born King or chief ruler of the Jews? and the guiding star of heaven leads them to Jesus. At length, he enters on his ministry—and the memorable confession of Nathaniel is—John, 1 : 49—thou art the king of Israel. By and by, he stands before the bar of Pilate—18 : 37—and is asked by him, Art thou a king? and he said, I am. Very soon, he is seen on the Cross, and the words written thereon, by the Governor, as pointing out who that crucified one was, were—Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

He was thus, not only prophet—the great teacher come from God—as one of the Jewish Council confessed—John, 3 : 2—not only a priest—being both the sacrifice—the Lamb of God—1 : 29—and the sacrificer, offering himself to God—Heb. 9 : 14—he was also king, the chief ruler, who came to reign—to exercise government on earth, and to him, so he affirmed, all authority in heaven and on earth had been committed, Mat. 28 : 18.

As showing this somewhat—the Jews themselves confessed—Mat. 7: 29—that he spake as one having authority. Besides this, he exhibited in his many acts, a power which was none other than the power of God—1 Cor. 1: 24—this stands acknowledged. And then, he was one in whom was found no sin, Heb. 4: 15. He was, indeed, falsely accused—Luke, 23: 10—and falsely testified against—Mark, 14: 6—and yet even his heathen judge announced to the Jews, I find no fault in him, Luke, 23: 4. Three years, at least, he had been publicly before the nation—such, nevertheless, was the proclaimed verdict.

But though designated and attested as he had been, by angels—by the Eastern Magi and others, as the king of the Jews—and with a character above all reproach—upon the very first occasion of his announcing publicly what he came to be, those hearing him were filled with wrath, and sought to kill him—Luke, 4: 28, 9—not, indeed, by secret murder—but by openly attempting, to cast him headlong down a precipice of rocks. But, he passing through the midst of them, went his way.

At length, near the end of his third year, some of the chief men of the nation consulted, and sought how they might take him by craft—Mark, 14: 1—and put him to death. They soon found one, who would betray him to them, for thirty pieces of silver—Mat. 26: 15—and this he did. He was then taken, and his condemnation was obtained from the Governor, by the people calling out for his death—thus making themselves responsible for it—and this procured his sentence.

And as he was being led to execution—among the multitude following along the way—there were some who loved him—they were his friends—they were women, and were sadly—sadly weeping. And he turned and said to them—Daughters of Jerusalem—weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children, adding an emphatic prophecy, as containing the reason why. But he was led on to the place appointed, and was there crucified. Yes, he, the King of the Jews—the head of the nation—of the body, which that people were—they shed his blood—they murdered him—they thus cut off their own head. It was the crowning act of rebellion.

The crime of murder is a high crime, even in the case of a private individual. By the law of God, and by the law of all

nations, its penalty is the murderer's own blood. But the murder of a chief ruler, is not the murder of an individual man simply—it is the murder of the nation's head—the one holding its highest seat of power, and is the highest crime that can be committed in a nation. It is a crime against the nation—it is a crime against the God of nations—it touches the Majesty in the heavens himself.

You and I, Brethren—believe that there is a God. So, in our Creed we but just now professed, and we believe the Bible is his word. Now, the crime before us reached him, as we have stated. It did not reach, simply and alone, the man Jesus—it reached him that sent him—that appointed Jesus king of the Jews—and I, saith Jehovah, have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion—so we ourselves sing in the second Psalm—and that king did himself say—He that despiseth [lit. rejecteth] me, despiseth [rejecteth] *Him* that sent me.

There is indeed no authority, no governmental power but from God himself—Rom. 13: 1.—The Scriptures are full and explicit upon this subject—John, 19: 10—3: 27, 31—James, 1: 17—Dan. 4: 17: 25, etc. And the Scriptures declaring it, the Church has appointed to be read, and so preached, to her worshippers four times at least every year, that they be not unmindful of the fact. And what God has thus declared—the Christian will not disbelieve, or call in question.

To set aside this, however, I am told, that “it ignores the entire theory and frame-work of our government, under which we live—which is totally unlike that of an Emperor or King, who is the source of power, and embodiment of sovereignty, while our rulers are merely public servants or agents, the people themselves being the sovereigns—and our rulers become such by their election.” Now, it would be sufficient for me to say, that there must be error here—just inasmuch as it sets aside God's word—and yet *that* word simply, I am set to teach

But I may remark in passing, that the error or errors rather in these statements are patent and palpable. In the first place, granting that the people are sovereigns, election does not constitute one a ruler—it is at best, but an act of designation to office—it does not by itself confer authority to officiate therein. A man may be elected by an unanimous vote—and yet, without some-

thing further, he dare not execute the duties of that office, even though it be but that of a constable. Besides his election, he must be invested in office, by those authorized to do so, in the manner provided—he must be commissioned—inaugurated—have the official declaration of authority committed to him.

Again, men are imposed upon by names. An emperor or king is no more the source of power, or embodiment of sovereignty, than is a president, for his term of office—who combines as ours does, the legislative, along with the executive and military power. In either case—the source of power, under God, is the same—in the one, as truly as the other. In the one case, it is by the will of the people expressed by a majority at the polls—and in the other, by the will of the people expressed by a minority, (for such an aristocracy always are,) and often expressed at the point of the bayonet, designating the immediate incumbent and his successors perhaps; and which exhibits God's interference the more, however it may be understood, may be safely left to any man's common sense.

But besides—it is said, our rulers are public servants or agents, and pray what rulers are not? Even our blessed Lord—though all authority in heaven and on earth had been committed to him, took upon him the form of a servant, and tells us, that he came not to be served, but to be a servant.—Phil. 2: 7—Mat. 20: 28—Mark, 10: 45.

Perhaps this may be said, to be preaching politics.—But not so, it is preaching against politics which go to set aside God's word. When politics undertake to set aside the plain truth of God's word, must nothing be said by his ministers to vindicate that word? must their mouths be closed, and so let political infidelity have its full sweep, because the infidelity is in connection with politics? is this faithfulness to their Master and the souls of men? is it honest?

And here, let this one thing be remembered, let any thing—we care not what, interpose to undermine or over-ride—whether by its philosophy, or otherwise, the plain and express teachings of God's word, be it Calvinism or Arminianism, anti-masonry or abolitionism—infidelity or spiritualism—temperance or tradition—politics or false teachings—heresy or schisms—the ultimate result will be disastrous to personal piety—and throw open the flood-gates of error. Let any one, make any thing paramount or superior to the teachings of our great Master—so that he interprets,

or squares them thereby—and he has adopted a principle, which cannot but be detrimental to the influence of Gospel truth in himself, and over others, and may end in the loss of his own soul.

But to come back to the point from which we have wandered, if it be indeed wandering. There is, in truth, no ruling authority, no governing power, but from God—directly or indirectly—so his word records. Men may not in fact believe that record—but so surely as they live He will sooner or later vindicate himself. Men cannot do that which goes to invade his throne, without calling forth his justice in stern and terrible retribution. Men may act, and communities too may act, as if there were no God—but they will alike, in his due time, come to *know*—that there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

We turn then here, to the inquiry—Who was it that crucified, that murdered Jesus, the king—the chief ruler of the Jews—on whom did the crime rest? We do not indeed ask, who pronounced the sentence of execution. We know who. We do not ask; who were the executioners?—that too we know. But by whom was it brought about? who plotted—who planned it—who said it must be done? who gave the thirty pieces of silver for his being betrayed? Who does not know, that this was the work of a select and leading few, who were the fabricators and leaders of public opinion—the scribes and pharisees—the priests and officers of the temple—the lawyers—the literati—the priesthood, and the office-holders of the nation!

And yet, all these could have accomplished nothing—had they not had their party—the multitude to sustain, to abet and aid them, who said, we will not have this man to reign and rule over us. It was the multitude thus influenced that demanded the blood of Jesus. Leaders indeed, do not dare to do that, which is not called for and approved by the multitude, as a general thing, and that approval identifies them with the leaders in their acts. And thus it is, the act is theirs—they become thus part and parcel in the crime—and partakers in the guilt.

The murder before us was not indeed—as we are thankful to bear in mind here—an act sustained by all and every individual of the Jewish nation—there were certainly exceptions, and such were the disciples of the suffering Jesus—such certainly were the women weeping, mentioned in our text.

But by what act, or acts, did the leaders and the people so generally identify themselves, and become involved in, this crime of blood?

First—they rejected the Messiah—their king—not being baptized unto him. This failure or neglect, was their rejection of him—so we are shown, in the case of the Pharisees and lawyers in John's time—Lk. 7 : 30—they rejected, it is stated, the counsel of God—calling them to repentance—and how? by not being baptized with his baptism—so it was with the multitude here. In one point of view, baptism is the oath of allegiance unto Jesus—it is binding one to him and his government. And when this tie to the ruler, or his government is not given—all know that one's position in relation to that ruler or government—and according to our Lord's decision before us—it is a rejection—showing him an enemy to that Ruler and against him—so in any case—it is distinctly saying, we will not have him to rule over us.

Secondly—they called for—they approved of his murder—their loud cry went up, crucify him—they called for his death, and those so calling, were as guilty, if not in degree—yet in fact—were as really guilty of his blood—as were those who ordered it—or as were those who nailed him to the cross. They thus sustained the personal actors in the terrible deed—they backed them. They were thus actually aiders and abettors of it—nay, they were, *in law*, principals.

Thirdly—they rejoiced in the deed being done. They treated him in word and in acts, with shameful indignity and contempt. They did the same to his followers also—his party, and simply because they were his. They not only showed thus, that they were against—but gladly against him, and they carried it so far, that they insulted Him—their king—on the cross while in his very agonies of death—they gloried in being rebels against him.

In all this, they thus aided directly, or indirectly in procuring the death of their king—in cutting off the head of the nation from its body—and so became partakers in its terrible guilt.

Thus then, as now shown—the Jews had crucified their King—they killed him—they were guilty of his blood—now, as before stated—it was a crime against the nation, and as such, should in their national capacity have been punished by it—This is according to the principle of God's law, justice requires this—and if not executed—blood rests upon the land. *The land cannot be cleansed*

of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it. So spake God to his people of old. Num. 35: 33—Such is his express declaration and as being the ground of his penal laws respecting murder.

But the power of the Civil Government may not be able to reach *all* that are equally guilty—though it may reach those guilty of the overt act—It may indeed reach the accomplices if known and found—but all aiders and abettors—equally criminal in point of law and fact, it may not be able to reach.

Or as in the case before us—the nation itself as a whole being the party guilty—it will not purify the land of the blood shed—In either case, it becomes his work, from whom no secret is hid—and whose justice cannot be bribed, and will not always sleep—and from that justice, there is no escape. And as nations, or people, as such, have no eternity, they must of course meet the retributions of that Justice in time.

When therefore our Lord said to his weeping followers—Weep not for me—but weep for yourselves and for your children—he added, For behold the days are coming—aye coming, in the which—they—your children—shall say—blessed are the women, that never bare, and the breasts which never nursed—for then—in those days, shall they say to the mountains, fall on us—to the hills cover us—for if they do these things to the green tree—and such, the righteous one is—what shall be done to the dry? the wicked—compare Ezek. 20: 47—21: 4—for behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner. Prov. 11: 31. If judgment begin at the house of God, what shall the end be, of them that obey not the gospel of God—1 Pet. 4: 17.

Now what was done to his followers—may show us—why he said to them weep for yourselves. But amidst all their persecutions and sufferings they endured, that generation lived on through all—and in due time passed away—the grave covered them—they were gone. Nor did God then come out to visit the murderers for their crime—to vindicate the majesty of his violated justice. But retribution was entailed—Judgment fell not on those murderers personally—but it did fall upon their children—a generation not living, when the great crime was committed.

And were *they* partakers of their fathers' guilt? Why as their Fathers did—so did they—they refused their allegiance to their

king—and rejected him, not being baptized unto him—they repented not. As their Fathers thought of Jesus—so, being taught by them, their children thought of him—held respecting him—spoke respecting him—they were the children of their fathers, and treated his memory as they had treated him in person. Of this their treatment of his followers, gave full and ample proof—for it was what it was, because they were his followers—and their treatment of them, was just so treating him. Why then, should not the Visitation fall on them?

With the principle indeed involved here, we, as readers of the Bible are familiar and as students of history know to be true. Sunday after Sunday, and year after year—We hear God's law proclaiming to us—I, the Lord God, visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, of them that hate me—These generations continuing to hate me as did the first. The responsibility of one generation to another—of fathers to children, we are shown thus is tremendous. They entail guilt on their descendants, and, along with the guilt, its righteous punishment.

With this indeed the Jew found fault. He said;—Ezek. 18: 19:—doth the son bear the iniquity of the father? God answers no—for if the son, turning away from the iniquity of the father, doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall live and not die—he shall not incur the penalty of the father's sin.

But as we have seen—the Jews now did not turn away from their Fathers' sin and a generation had now passed away—Thirty-three years had elapsed, and they not only had not ceased their rebellion against Jesus, their king—but were left to involve themselves in another rebellion—they insanely revolted from their civil government—the Roman. We say insanely—because they, a small country, of about 160 miles in length, and 120 in breadth, with a population, probably not exceeding 4,000,000, waged war with the Roman government—then, the government of the world, having 120,000,000 population, and drew down upon themselves its whole power. In the course of three years—their three provinces—Judea, Samaria and Galilee were conquered, and all their towns were taken and destroyed—with the loss—as given us by their own historian—of 250,000 slain. Their City—the City of Jerusalem, was itself then besieged. This occurred at one of their

great annual festivals—that of the passover—when the city was filled with those, who had come up to that festival, from all parts of the land, and it was encompassed and shut up by the Roman Armies.

Still more insanelly—supposing, that their walls insured their safety from the enemy outside—they became divided into three fierce contending parties—who slaughtered each other with fiendish cruelty. Soon came famine, and multitudes died therefrom daily—and such was the extremity to which they were reduced—that houses were sacked—dead bodies were searched and when nothing else could be found, girdles—shoes—dried grass were eagerly devoured, and one lady even murdered and roasted and ate her own child. At length the walls were broken down and the city was so completely destroyed, that the plough-share was made to pass in triumph over it. The number that perished in the siege is stated at 1,000,000, and the remainder taken captives was near 100,000—of these many were thrown to the wild beasts as sport for their captors—many were sent into Africa to work in the mines and the rest were sold every where, at a contemptible price as slaves. So perished Jerusalem and the Jews as a nation.

And these, let it be remembered, were the children of those, who killed their king—these were the dry tree—withered, lifeless, fruitless. They were separated by their own course, from their appointed head—they abode not in him—Jno. 15: 6—and thus were gathered together, cast into the fiery caldron and consumed.

But the green trees—what came upon them, in the midst of this terrible desolation? Filled with terror and affright, as we may easily understand they must have been, by the dark clouds rolling over them—we wonder not, that they should call on the mountains to fall on them, and on the hills to cover and conceal them from the overwhelming ruin. And it was not without deep meaning that Jesus had said to their mothers—the daughters of Jerusalem—Weep for your children—for in this day of vengeance—with others, they suffered all the horrors of famine—the loss of all worldly goods and the destruction of their dwellings—and thus found themselves, houseless—homeless—ragged to even nakedness—mere skeletons. These things they could not escape—they fell on all alike.

But though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the

morning—Ps. 30: 5—and so it fell out, in the providence of God—that just before the final destruction of the city—for three days, the siege was raised, and the armies were removed from the walls. During these days, the disciples—having been forewarned—fled from the city—across the Jordan N. E. to Pella, a city in the mountains, distant, some seventy miles, and were all saved alive—not a hair of their heads perished, as it had been promised—and there for ages, a Christian Church flourished. And, as *they* were rescued, so *all* might have been. Who possibly can doubt it?

In bringing this subject forward now, it is not, to institute any personal comparison, between the *character* of Jesus of Nazareth, and that of any earthly ruler whomsoever—much less that of the late President of the United States—whose assassination called the nation to fasting and mourning, on this first day of June—God forbid that we should do this. But it is brought forward, because *a great principle of God's government of the world, is involved*, which we should not overlook—the one, being constituted the chief ruler of the Jews—the other the chief magistrate of a nation. His murder therefore, is not to be looked at as that of a private, individual man—but as the murder of the official head of the people of the land—and so looked at, it is a crime which in no other case, can be paralleled—it is so regarded by the North and the South, and the governments of Europe. That in our case, it was called forth by our national sins—no one recognizing the Government of the Judge of all the earth, will for one moment deny. These sins have brought this blood upon our land. Our rulers indeed do well in aiming to cleanse the land by the blood of them that shed it. They may do much—but O, how many there may be as truly guilty as the hand that struck the fatal blow, whom they cannot reach. To reach such, that is in the hands of God—and in view of the great fact that his day of retribution must come, we may well say—weep for yourselves and for your children. We thank God indeed that so many assemble to day under the appointment of the national authority to confess their sins—to seek God's pardon and the turning away his displeasure from our Land. May the prayers this day offered be heard, and the blessing of the living God be secured to ourselves and to our children to latest generations.



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